



# Stand with Georgina Island First Nation to Protect the Lake Simcoe Watershed

September 2017



The Chippewas of Georgina Island are descendants of a larger group known as the Chippewas of Lakes Huron and Simcoe. We are an Anishnaabe people and our language is Ojibwe. Proud and progressive, we continue to assert our Aboriginal rights as guaranteed in the Canadian constitution.

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## HOMELAND DECLARATION of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation

By this Declaration, the Chippewas of Georgina Island by its Chief, Council and People of our community gives formal notice to other governments, resources users and developers, its neighbors and the general public of the rights and interests we assert and will continue to be stewards and guardians in our original, traditional and historic territory.

Chippewas of Georgina Island have exercised this responsibility to use and protect the Lake Simcoe Watershed, lands and resources. Lake Simcoe and its watershed, our homeland has sustained our citizens since time immemorial, drawing on animals, fish and plants for our sustenance.

We have suffered frequent infringements, as the waters of Lake Simcoe and its Watershed are increasingly being disrespected, misused, degraded and polluted by developers, agriculture and urbanization creating species at risk, compounded by such things as climate change, invasive species and activities that occur outside or adjacent to our community and traditional lands.

We have the right to free, prior and informed consent to developments on our lands and waters; and will exercise our jurisdiction on a Nation to Nation basis.

We have the right to consultation, where it must be carried out with deep and mutual respect, through fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent processes.

In this time of Truth and Reconciliation we will continue to raise our voices and concerns in solidarity to speak for the lands, waters and all our relations. Through the guidance of the Creator, we will do what is necessary to protect the waters, lands, animals and air in our territory.

Our future generations are the ones who will be affected by our decisions. The voices of our ancestors through traditional teachings, stories and ceremonies must continue to be respected.

This Homeland Declaration pertains to all industrial and urban growth activities proposed across the Lake Simcoe Watershed.

## Anishinaabe Water Song

Way waya hey ha  
waya hey ha waya-ho  
way ah ho

Way waya hey ha  
waya hey ha waya-ho  
way ah ho

Wayo way ya-hey hi  
ya-ho way hio

Wayo way ya heyo

Nakweshkodaadidaa  
ekobiyaag.  
(Let's meet by the  
water.)

Gabe-dibik giga  
nagamomin.  
(All night we all will  
sing.)

Nakweshkodaadidaa  
ekobiyaag.  
(Let's meet by the  
water.)

Anaami anangoons  
giga dewe'igemin.  
(Under the stars we all  
will drum.)

Giga waabmaanaan  
mooshkineaapkizid  
dibiki-giizis.  
(We all will see her the  
full shaped moon)

Epiichi bagosen-  
damang.  
(While we all have  
hope.)

Way waya hey ha  
waya hey ha waya-ho  
way ah ho

Wayo way ya-hey hi  
ya-ho way hio

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Imagine not being able to drink from your tap water for over 2 years and finding out that the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) received a proposal that will dump over 40 million litres of treated sewage daily into your only source of water.

This is exactly what the people of Georgina Island First Nation (GIFN) have been dealing with. GIFN have been raising concerns about the impacts of the proposed Upper York Sewage Solutions (UYSS) treatment plant project on the Lake Simcoe watershed.

The York Region municipality is claiming the project will have no adverse impacts on the Lake.

In solidarity with GIFN, we are calling for the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change to explicitly reject the proposal as it stands.

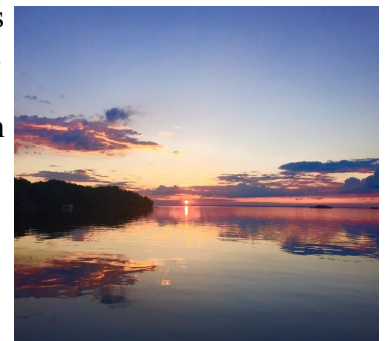
### Georgina Island First Nation Leadership objections center around:

- The results presented in the Environmental Assessment only reflect studies conducted for a period of one year, meaning long term impacts on the ecosystem are not accounted for or considered
- The impact of pharmaceutical and personal care products on the water are unclear and no studies have been conducted on their impact on the Lake Simcoe watershed
- Traditional ecological knowledge of GIFN has not been incorporated
- No studies have been

conducted on how the Lake and watershed will be affected overall by the developments in York Region and the waste and pollution that will be generated through this development.

York Region has not submitted a project management plan for the UYSS project. It has been proposed that this plan will be completed upon approval. GIFN strongly disagrees with this approach and believes that the project management plan should be part of the Environmental Assessment.

Furthermore there has been a lack of commitment from the Ministry to ensure the cleanup of the site of the Thane aluminium smelter, shut down in 1997, which is an illegal waste site that is contaminating ground-water and seeping into Lake Simcoe.



# PETITION

**If you want to help protect the Lake Simcoe Watershed, Please sign this petition to the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change.**

***I, the undersigned, to hereby explicitly reject the Upper York Sewage Solutions project proposal as it stands and urge the Ontario Ministry of Environment and Climate Change to:***

1. Revisit the consultation process and actively seek the consent of the Georgina Island First Nation
2. Include rehabilitation of water infrastructure on Georgina Island
3. Include clean-up of Thane smelter site

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please drop off signed petitions in the Guardians of the Lake Petition Box located at the Georgina Island PowWow, or mail to:**

**Chippewas of Georgina Island  
Guardians of the Lake  
RR#2 Box N13  
Sutton West, ON  
L0E 1R0**

**You can also follow this link to sign the petition online:**

<https://www.change.org/p/stand-with-gifnlakeguardians-and-urge-the-ontario-ministry-of-the-environment-and-climate-change-to-reject-the-upper-york-sewage-solutions-project>

The following is an excerpt from the Toronto Star printed on May 14, 2017 by reporter Noor Javed. To read the full story, you can find it at <https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2017/05/14/georgina-island-residents-raise-concerns-over-proposed-sewage-plant.html>.

## Georgina Island Residents Raise Concerns over Proposed Sewage Plant

The Upper York Sewage Solutions project proposed for East Gwillimbury has been in the works since 2009 — and is needed to support growth in booming York Region, and in particular the northern municipalities of Aurora, Newmarket and East Gwillimbury. The region has been awaiting approval from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change since 2014.

Charles knows her community's concerns are behind the delay.

"We have been at the table since Day 1, but we have questions and concerns that haven't been answered," Charles said. "We are not trying to cause trouble. We are surrounded by this water.

Our lives depend on this water. If it goes stagnant, our island and environment, and culture will die off."

Despite its proximity to the GTA, the island feels remote: The 1,415-hectare land mass is almost all forest. A two-lane dirt road, along which all of its 200 residents live, lines the square-shaped island. And, during winter, the northern part of the island is completely unmaintained.

Across the water from the island ferry docks is the northern tip of York Region, three kilometres away, where housing developments have long been planned around existing sewage servicing. For years, septic tanks and sewage lagoons have done the

job. But with the population expected to hit 1.5 million by 2031, officials were prompted to start planning for the future.

Currently, most of the sewage from southern York Region is sent to Lake Ontario, via Durham, through the York Durham sewage system, known as the Big Pipe, which was built in the late 1970s and early '80s. But this time around, the province told York it could no longer look downstream for a solution.

In an environment ministry review of the assessment available online, the ministry says it was "satisfied" with the region's consultation with the Georgina Island residents. The report also says the region had adequately responded to concerns around pharmaceutical and personal

care products in the water, and would be committed to the creation of a monitoring and strategy program to deal with the effect of the plant on water quality, species and human health.

But the islanders say they still have concerns and want to ensure their traditional ecological knowledge will be incorporated in the final decision. They also want the province to conduct a complete health impact assessment on their community before the project proceeds, with one question in mind: Will the long-term effects of the sewage plant drastically change the way of life for the Chippewas of Georgina Island?

